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NSC BRIEFING

1 October 1959

ALGERIA-FRANCE

- I. Despite firm public positions taken by both Paris and rebels, there is evidence of give on both sides.
- II. Algerian rebel reply on Monday to De Gaulle's self-determination proposals tosses ball back to French. Statement accepts French program as basis for negotiations, but with major reservations.
- III. Initial French reaction negative. Ministry of Information alleged rebels "unresponsive" to De Gaulle program, and non-Communist press generally critical of tone of rebel reply.
- IV. Without going beyond De Gaulle's 16 September proposals, French may clarify to FLN through private channels some objections raised by Algerians.
 - A. Louis Joxe, Secretary of State in Debre's office, has indicated to US representatives that several therapy points "could be discussed later." Debre in a 26 September conversation with US ambassador had stated flatly that De Gaulle's public statement was as far as the French President could go but this probably wasn't indicative of De Gaulle attitude.
 - B. French ambassador in Tunis has indicated that he is authorized to transmit to De Gaulle in secrecy any rebel request for clarification sent via the Tunisians.
- V. Although rebel reply may open door to negotiations hard bargaining is in prospect.

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2. Whereas rebel government continues to regard itself as legitimate government of Algeria, French reject this status and will not negotiate political issues with them. Possible, however, that rebels might drop insistence on governmental status in negotiations.
3. De Gaulle's offer of choice of independence to Algerians does not include oil-rich Saharan departments. Rebels, on other hand, insist that Algeria is indivisible.
4. Members of rebel government have been critical of US statements on De Gaulle's plan, characterizing US as wanting rebels to accept French program unconditionally but now want US to press French to negotiate.

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